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Opinion poll shows

Varsity teachers unaware of UN role in Bangladesh

Staff Correspondent

An opinion survey conducted over politicians, bureaucrats and university teachers showed that the university teachers were unaware of the organisational status of the United Nations (UN) i.e., intergovernmental organisation.

It was found that in majority cases e.g. year of establishment, sources of finance, areas of current activity and type of organisation, the politicians were more aware and informed than the bu-

reaucrats and university teachers. If this order is put serially, the politicians, bureaucrats and university teachers could be placed in first, second and third positions respectively.

Dr. Mohammed Samad, Associate Professor of the Department of Social Welfare and Research, Dhaka University and Secretary of United Nations Association in Bangladesh (UNAB) conducted the survey recently on 75 respondents—25 politicians, 25 bureaucrats and 25 university teachers.

The respondent were found quite aware of the year of establishment, sources of finance, current areas of activity and UN as a type of organisation, the survey report said. According to the report, out of the total respondents, 73.0.72 to about 98 and 74.3 per cent respectively could mention the year of establishment of the UN (in 1945), sources of finance (donations/grants by the member states), current major activities (world peacekeeping, human rights, education, poverty reduction and women empowerment) and UN as a type of organisation (intergovernmental organisation), which indicated the awareness of the respondents.

The study was conducted to understand and assess the extent of awareness of the politicians, bureaucrats and university teachers of the role of the UN in Bangladesh.

The respondents having correct answer of above 60 per cent, 40 to 60 per cent and bellow 40 per cent respectively have been ranked as aware, average aware and unaware in the study.

The study report further said opinion was sought about reflection of the views of world community in UN activities and peacekeeping and human rights activities. According to 64 per cent of the total respondents, the UN activities do not reflect the views of world community.

In support of their statement most of them—85.42 and 79 per cent respectively suggested to annul veto power and take decisions through consensus on various world issues. They also suggested to be more accommodating in accepting opinion, introduction of non-government representation and reduction of government representation in various forum of the UN. "Suggestions for annulment of veto power and taking decision through consensus actually is the outburst of the vulnerable position and low voice of the developing countries compared to their industrially developed counterpart.

A great majority of the total respondent (more than 89 per cent) opined that the role of the UN in world peacekeeping and human rights activities is satisfactory.

The respondents were not found well informed and aware about the roles that played by the UN human rights commission (HRC), UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF and FAO during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. However, it is observed that respondents were more or less found well informed and aware of the current development activities of the UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, WHO, WFP, UNIC, UNFPA and UNFCR working in Bangladesh.

All the three categories of respondents were found extremely unaware when they were asked whether Bangladesh was faced opposition from any of its member countries in obtaining membership and about the year of obtaining the UN membership. "only 24 and 13.3 per cent of the total respondents were able to reply correctly," the study revealed.